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ABSTRACT

Based on Heilbruner's thesis (1959) in "The Future as History," an understanding of the historical strengths, weaknesses, institutional forms, and trends in adult education can help predict its future. The flexibility and diversity of adult education have been tremendous advantages. They have also contributed to the confusion over what adult education is. Demographic forces that will make adult and continuing education a primary concern for educators include increasing adult populations, increasing adult education participation, and career transition. Accumulating evidence indicates that society is less literate and well informed than was true a generation ago. Mass media are blamed as contributors to that increase in illiteracy. Adult and continuing educators are, more and more, graduates of doctoral programs. The literature supports contentions that the field of adult education lacks a solid foundation of scholarship and is weak in theory. Implications of demographics for the future imply a substantial demand for occupational and career training, enrollment increases, and changes in student composition enrolled in traditional academia. Educators will have to impart a capacity to learn and provide computer literacy training. Research on adult education will grow. The increased recognition of adult and continuing education will bring it a new status as an academic discipline. (YLB)

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NOTE: PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

The future of Adult Education in the United States is presented in terms of anticipated growth patterns influenced by social, economic, and demographic variables presented in our society. Heilbroner's thesis (1959) The Future as History, is used to argue that an understanding of the historical strengths, weaknesses, institutional forms, organizational forms, and trends in adult education can be useful in predicting future growth for this type of education.

HISTORY AS A PROLOGUE TO THE FUTURE

The future of adult and continuing education is subject to the trends and pressures of the larger society--which is visibly a society in transition. Demographic changes, accumulating knowledge that society is less literate, and doctoral training and research in adult education are just three of the challenges that confront us in the future. How adult and continuing education will respond to these conditions can, in part, be predicted through an examination of history.

Robert Heilbroner (1959), in The Future as History, argues "that history, when examined in light of contemporary developments can identify forces at work in the world whose impact on our destiny is neither wholly arbitrary nor wholly unpredictable." Based on Heilbroner's thesis, an understanding of the historical strengths, weaknesses, institutional forms, organizational forms and trends in adult education could be very useful in predicting the future.

Throughout history, the adult education movement in the United States has allowed for diversity, flexibility, innovation and imaginative responses to a wide range of changing educational needs (Andrews, 1980; Harrington, 1977). Unlike other countries where the adult education movements "have tended to be fairly

unified in aims and institutional forms," the American practice has been highly expansive and flexible (Knowles, 1962). The responsibility for providing adult education in the United States was not vested in a few organizations but was provided by a variety of diverse groups for various social, political and economic reasons. The providers of adult education have included: YM(W)CA's, libraries, museums, labor unions, public schools, women's clubs, charitable organizations, university extension and private entrepreneurs to name a few.

The lack of control or domination of the field by any one particular group or institution has permitted adult education to extend itself to a wide variety of people. Participants in adult education represent a cross section of the population in terms of age, race, sex, income and occupation. The range and the scope of adult education has historically been unlimited. Knowles (1962, p.v.) states that "the national adult education program in the United States has proliferated almost haphazardly in response to a myriad of irdividual needs and interests, institutional goals, and social pressures."

Axford (1969) suggests that when the diversity and disunion of adult education is observed through history, we come to the conclusion that the field lacks any master plan or design. Adult

education programs and agencies have responded to specific needs and, as a result, have tended to be episodic (Axford, 1969, p. 3). Herein lies one of adult education's greatest strengths and also one of its serious weaknesses. The strength obviously is in the diversity and flexibility to respond to any educational need quickly and imaginatively. Andrews (1980) describes the potential weaknesses as duplication of programs and unevenness of program quality. Knowles (1962, p. vi.) suggests the apparent "formlessness" of the adult education enterprise has been its major weakness.

Confusion about what the adult education movement in this country encompasses and how it should be structured has impeded persistent efforts toward better communication across lines of specialization, toward agreement on common social goals, and toward the achievement of some degree of coordination. Others (Axford, 1969, p. 4; Bryson, 1936) see the freedom and diversification as a strength that has allowed adult education to penetrate more phases of American life than in any other country. One can argue that the flexibility and diversity and even marginality have been tremendous advantages; however, they have also contributed to the confusion over what adult education is and what it is supposed to accomplish.

HISTORICAL PURPOSE AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

The history of adult education clearly suggests it responded to the needs of a society in transition in a variety of institutional and organizational forms. The lyceum of Josiah Holbrook (1826) is just one example of an adult education form which arose, met a need, and waned. Initially, the lyceum lecture series provided a touch of general education for the relatively affluent and technical training for lower income citizens engaged in farming and trade occupations (Harrington, 1977, p. 12; Axford, 1969, p. 5). The first town lyceum in Millbury, Massachusetts (1826) quickly grew to 1,000 by 1831. The stated purpose of the organization was "the advancement of education, especially in the common schools, and the general diffusion of knowledge" (Knowles, p. 16). By 1840, the national lyceum movement gradually withered, becoming a scattered lecture series (Knowles, p. 17).

The agricultural education movement in the United States provides another example of the changing institutional forms of adult education. Agricultural societies began appearing after the American Revolution to "promote agricultural production through printed materials, contests and fairs" (Knowles, p. 23). By 1860, over 1,941 separate agricultural societies had been formed.

Higher education eventually replaced the societies as providers of agriculture education when the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 was passed (Knowles, p. 24). The government sponsorship of adult education, at least in the agricultural sense, improved with the passage of the Smith-Level Act (1914) which permanently tied cooperative extension to the land grant system (Harrington, p. 17). Harrington describes the Smith-Level Act as the "government's most impressive piece of adult education legislation," stating further: "it is a pity that it did not become the model for other adult education statutes."

Cyril O. Houle describes agricultural extension as the largest and most successful example of postsecondary adult education in the United States, if not the world. "No single facet of the adult education enterprise can claim with equal justification to have educated so many adults so well," adds another specialist (Verner, 1964).

The early nineteen hundreds found adult educators consumed with the responsibility of providing "Americanization" education for the almost one million immigrants entering the United States each year (Knowles, 1969, p. 55). Literacy training for immigrants was intensified in 1917 when Congress passed an act requiring literacy for naturalization. World War I and World War II

brought about the need for practical industrialized training that would make workers proficient and open doors to promotions (Harrington, 1977, p. 15). World War II produced the most remarkable event in the history of on-campus degrees for adults, the passing of the G.I. Bill. The statute made it possible for millions of young adult veterans to go to college with the financial support of billions of federal dollars. These G.I.'s showed that older students were capable and could persevere if given adequate assistance (Harrington, p. 21; Stern, 1978).

During the 1950's, new technologies, mass communication and the changing nature of society contributed to the replacement of traditional adult education providers (Stern, 1978). The diminished role of libraries, labor unions, churches and charitable organizations increased the importance of community colleges, university extension, business and independent proprietary schools.

Another recent development affecting the participant of continuing education is the emergence of mandated continuing education (MCE). The term was coined to describe the tendency of states and some professional organizations to require the members of certain vocations and professions to fulfill educational obligations in order to retain or renew their licenses to practice (Cross, 1981). According to Hohmann (1980), mandated

continuing education has created a "new breed of continuing education--the marketer--and the professional is no longer just another participant, but the market." Cross (1981, p. 40-41) reports that forty-five states now require continuing education for optometrists, and forty-two have continuing education requirements for nursing home administrators. In Iowa, legislators recently passed an omnibus bill requiring all twenty-three professional licensing boards in the state to establish continuing education requirements for relicensure (Hohmann, 1980). While many people believe that continuing education is a good way for professionals to keep up with new developments and techniques in their respective fields, there is rising concern about blanket legislation that would make continuing education legally mandatory for professionals (Cross, 1981, p. 41). Mandated continuing education is just one of the many issues confronting adult and continuing education in the future.

DEMOGRAPHICS

There are several demographic forces at work in our society that will clearly make adult and continuing education a primary rather than a secondary concern for educators. Increasing adult populations, increasing adult education participation, and career

transition are just three areas which will impact the future of adult education.

The United States is fast becoming a nation of adults. The National Center for Education Statistics projects by the year 2,000, "the United States will be dominated by persons in their middle years." During most of the century, the population was numerically dominated by young people, and, with the exception of World War II years, children under the age of 15 have always been the largest single age group in the country. In 1980, this numerical dominance shifted to those between 15 and 29, and by the year 2,000, the largest age group will be 30 to 44 years old, with a rising curve for 45 to 69 years old (Cross, 1981).

The demographic shift will dramatically impact higher education in transforming student populations which historically have been youth oriented to predominately adult orientated.

In 1965, 80 percent of college enrollment was accounted for by students aged 18 to 24, but by 1975, this group represented only 66 percent of the total. Among undergraduates, students aged 25 and older accounted for 28 percent of the total headcount and nearly 20 percent of the full time equivalent (FTE) enrollment in 1978 (Carnegie Commission, 1982).

Historically, a readily abundant supply of 18 to 22 year old

students and society's adoption of what Best and Stern (1976) refer to as the "linear life plan" contributed to the belief that education was primarily for the young. They argue that in the history of industrialized nations, there has been a tendency to increase the separation between education, work and leisure. The result is a life plan in which education is for the young, work for the middle aged and leisure for the elderly (Cross, 1981). Institutions of higher education have used and thereby reinforced the problems of the segmented or linear life plan by gearing their educational activities toward the younger, full-time student. Boyer (1974) argues that college catalogs and brochures were generally written for the young, suggesting that students come in just four groupings--eighteen, nineteen, twenty and twenty-one. College classes were generally scheduled Monday through Friday, usually 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., colliding head on with the world of work. The normal educational path consisted of continual, full-time participation, fall and winter until the student was prepared to enter the world of work.

Harrington (1977) notes that although part-time, postsecondary education has been available for over a century and a half, many academics have expressed attitudes of indifference, skepticism (especially as to quality), and even open opposition.

Early participants in extension or night school stated that "if it were not for financial hardships, most students would have taken the normal route, the "better way", straight from the lower grades up through the bachelor degree (Harrington). Colleges' continued growth in terms of traditional students contributed to the questioned legitimacy and worth of the part-time adult student.

The glory years of higher education coincided with a huge demand for the services of college graduates. Gordon (1982) suggests that the young people graduating from college after 1940 did so in an environment in which the demand continued through the 50's and 60's and leveled off in the 70's (Gordon).

Cross (1981) notes that the baby-boom cohort which previously provided institutions with large numbers of traditional (18-21 year old) students, was now moving into the labor market--a market that was not as favorable as the 60's. In the 1970's, there was a sharp decline in the demand for teachers which forced rising proportions of female college graduates into lower-paying clerical and sales positions (Gordon, 1982). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (1979) published data indicating the contrasts between the types of jobs recent college graduates obtained in the period from 1969 to 1976 compared with those they obtained from 1962 to 1969. All in all, 65 percent entered professional and managerial positions in

the more recent period, compared with 90 percent in the earlier period. The decline occurred entirely in the professional fields--from 73 percent in 1962-1969 to 46 percent in 1969-1976.

Best and Stern (1976) suggest the large number of college graduates entering the labor market in the 1970's are finding it difficult to move beyond the lower echelons of the occupational ladder. Some people, denied promotion in one career, may decide on midlife career changes, most of which require supplemental training. A recent study estimates as many as forty million Americans are in a state of transition regarding their careers or jobs; 60 percent of them say that they plan to seek additional education (Arbeiter and others, 1978). Cross (1981) projects that others may solve their problems of lack of career mobility through seeking satisfaction in other ways--through new hobbies, recreation or attention to families, all of which may involve new learning. Boaz (1978) maintained that the greatest growth subject in adult education between 1969 and 1975 was social life and recreation, closely followed by personal and family living.

Cross (1981) argues that the National Center for Education Statistics, which has monitored adult education participation in the United States since 1969, has changed its definition of "part-time participant in adult education" just enough over the

years to make it virtually impossible to present useful information about trends. O'Keefe (1977) suggested that the adult education boom peaked somewhere around 1972. He bases his prediction on the fact that in the first interval of the triennal surveys, 1969-1972, participation in adult education increased 20.1 percent for a 6.6 percent increase in the adult population, whereas during the second interval, 1972-1975, participation slowed to an 8.4 percent increase for a 5.6 percent increase in the growth of the eligible population. The data gathered by the 1978 Adult Education Participation Survey and reported by the National Center for Education Statistics in The Condition of Education Statistical Report 1980 reveals that the number of adult education participants was over 19 million, almost 40 percent greater than the number of full-time high school or college students. Other select characteristics of participants in adult education as revealed in the report are as follows:

- A majority of the courses were paid for by the participants or their families.
- The majority of courses were taken for job related reasons.
- Most adult education activities were non-credit i.e., they were not taken for higher education

degree credit or occupational certification.

- White collar workers, while comprising one-third of the adult population, make up over half of the participants in adult education.
- The two-year colleges have shown the greatest growth as providers among institutions of higher education.
- Fifty-four percent of those participating took courses through organizations other than those which traditionally have offered educational services to adults.
- Over fifty percent of the adult education participants were women.
- Blacks and Hispanics were significantly under-presented in relation to their percentage in the population as a whole.
- Participants in adult education were almost twice as likely as the total population to have previous higher education experience.
- Approximately 61 percent of the adult education participants had annual family incomes of over $15,000 compared to 44 percent of the general

population.

Although Cross (1981) questions the validity of the adult participation trend statistics; some comparisons with higher education trends are evident. It would appear that the nation's colleges have passed their peak; they say the glory days are gone and we must live with retrenchment and the steady state. However, the net result of the postwar experience was one of the greatest achievements ever in the history of higher education, namely, the opening up of colleges and universities to a substantial portion of the traditional age cohorts and to millions of older persons as well (Bowen, 1982). Through the achievements of the postwar period, higher education changed from what Bowen describes as "a preserve of a privileged minority of the people to a place of personal development open to qualified persons of all classes." Higher education's rate of enrollment growth slowed and near the end of the decade almost leveled out (Bowen). Consistent somewhat with higher education, participation in adult education has slowed from its extremely rapid increase of 21 percent from 1969 to 1972 to 12.5 percent in 1978 (Cross).

EVIDENCE THAT SOCIETY IS LESS LITERATE AND LESS INFORMED THAN A GENERATION AGO

Historically, the American people have realized a series of great accomplishments. We've been victorious in our struggle for independence, created a tremendously productive economy, and lived through a long series of military victories. The prevailing mood of the country has been that of pride in past achievements and optimism for the future.

Today the historic optimism, and the drive of the American people seems somewhat diminished. There appears to be a prevailing loss of confidence in government, the economy, and the ability of our educational system to effectively educate. In reference to the latter, there is accumulating evidence that our society is less literate, even less well informed than was true only a generation ago, despite the spread of electronic mass media and continuing technological change.

Just how well educated are the American people today? Over the years the educational attainment of the population has risen steadily and rapidly. The U.S. Bureau of the Census shows a steady decline in the percentage of adult Americans, twenty-five years and over, whose education was limited to the grade school level, a steady increase in the percentage of persons who have graduated from high school, and a threefold increase in the percentage who have attended college. The median years of school

attended increased from 8.4 in 1940 (just above the grade school level) to 12.5 in 1979 (just above the high school level), a net gain of four years.

There are some troubling aspects to these trends, however. The 1979 data reveals that 18.3 percent (almost one-fifth) of the population have not attended beyond grade school. Further examination reveals that although the percentage of the population completing four years of college rose from 11.0 percent in 1970 to 16.4 percent in 1979, the percentage completing high school dropped from 51.1 percent in 1970 to 50.6 percent in 1979. The trends in high school completion appear to have stabilized somewhat with drop-out rates still high, especially among blacks and Hispanics (Social Indicators.III). Although one could agree that significant progress has been made, a recent national study of the American College Testing Examination (used primarily in the Western, Southern, and North Central States) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (used extensively in the East) have shown a pattern of decline during the past ten years. The average composite score on the ACT test declined 1.2 points in a ten-year period (Intellect, Nov., 1976). These educational attainment trends and scores do not, however, provide us with accurate indicators of competence, knowledge, and values of the adult population.

In one study, a group of researchers at the University of Texas, under the direction of Nowell Northcutt, conducted a nationwide survey of the ability of people to function in daily life. The survey, known as the Adult Performance Level Study, (1975), was conducted with a carefully selected sample of the entire adult population. The respondents were divided into three groups: (1) those judged to be severely limited in functional competence, (2) those able to function with minimal adequacy, and (3) those deemed to be proficient. The general findings reveal:

(1) That slightly less than one-half of our population are "proficient" in carrying on the various activities involved in daily living and working.

(2) One-third function with "minimal" adequacy.

(3) One-fifth are "severely limited" in their functional competence.

The study shows that proficiency is strongly correlated with the level of formal education. Only a few (3 percent) of those with less than six years of school attained proficiency, and conversely, only a few (9 percent) with some college education are classified as severely limited.

Hunter and Harman (1979) reviewed several investigations

relating to learning deficiencies, especially illiteracy. One fact emerges clearly from all the statistical information available, whether the measure is competency or school completion. Despite the universal free education available in this country since early in the century, despite the fact that more and more young people of all races and ethnic groups are completing high school, and despite the recent evidence that those who do complete high school are achieving "acceptable" levels of literacy, a disproportionately large section of our adult population--well over a third--still suffers some educational disadvantage. Among these, millions of adults in our society are functionally illiterate; their exact number is unknown.

The statistics reported in the U.S. Bureau of Census differ somewhat from the finding of Hunter and Harman. U.S. Bureau of the Census, in its Statistical Abstract of the United States, reports that illiteracy has been falling steadily from 11.3 percent of the population in 1900 to 1.2 percent in 1970. Certainly, discrepencies of what constitutes literacy are sure to emerge as we develop new definitions of "illiteracy" consistent with the continuing cultural revolution in our midst (Knowles, 1962). As society becomes more complex, the level of competence required to "effectively" function should increase. The available literature suggests that data on the

actual attainment or competency of the American people (as distinct from the amount of time they served in the formal educational system) are rare. Absent this data, specific levels of formal education required to classify one as "contemporarily literate" are difficult to establish. I would argue strongly for a clear distinction between "contemporary literacy" (the ability of a person to operate effectively in a rapidly changing democracy) versus Webster's (1976) definition, (someone who can read and write).

IMPACT OF THE MASS MEDIA

"I think television should be the visual counterpart of the literacy essay. It should arouse our dreams, satisfy our hunger for beauty, take us on journeys, enable us to participate in events, present great drama and music, explore the sea and the sky and the woods and the hills. It should be our Lyceum, our Chautauqua, our Minsky's and our Camelot."

E.B. WHITE 1966
(The Wilson Quarterly/Winter 1981)

Although E.B. White's vision of television is a pleasant one, present trends in programming and consumer uses render it somewhat unrealistic. Watching television is the one thing almost all Americans do, and if the experts are right, they will be doing more of it every year for some time to come. Inevitably, TV has become the

focus of much scholarly inquiry. Has it fostered a decline in literacy among our population--especially the young? Historian Daniel Boorstin, the Librarian of Congress, has called television "the next great crisis in human consciousness." Such predictions have attended the birth of all new forms of mass communication. Plato warned that disciples of writing would "generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the shadow of wisdom without the reality." Gutenburg's printing press was alleged to breed dissent some said, and gave common folk dangerous ideas (Swerdlow, 1981).

Now the television specifically, and mass communication in general, is under attack. The obvious question is whether there is any relationship between what children (or adults for that matter) see on television or in movies, or read in newspapers and magazines, and their attitudes toward the world. Research into the behavior implications of television has not been conclusive (Best, 1973; Swerdlow, 1981).

What is clear is that people make extensive use of the mass media, especially television. Television has, in a relatively short span of slightly less than forty years, become as wide-spread a means of communication as the telephone; over ninety-eight percent of homes in the United States have at least one television set; and it

is in use over six hours per day (Lichty, 1981). At the same time television has assumed prominence as a source of news and entertainment for the family. Swerdlow (1981) suggests television may have an impact on why "Johnny can't read." Swerdlow argues that difficulties in America's classrooms stem from many causes; family instability, lack of discipline at home and in schools, and educational fads have all taken their toll. However, Swerdlow suggests, ever since the first members of the TV generation began applying to colleges during the 1960's, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores have shown a steady decline. "Television", the authors of a 1977 SAT study concluded, "has become a surrogate parent, a substitute teacher."

Comstock et al (1978) provide the following behavior characteristics of youthful television viewers:

- By age 15, the average American child has spent more time (about 20,000 hours) in front of a television than in the classroom--or doing homework.
- During the school year, approximately 1.5 million children age 2 to 11 are still watching television at midnight on weekdays.
- Researchers generally agree that heavy viewers comprehend less of what they read than do light viewers.

- The more television a child watches, the worse he does in school. (The sole exception may be students with low IQ's).
- "Mentally gifted" grammar school students show a ma drop in creative abilities after just three weeks television viewing.

Certainly, television cannot be blamed alone for decreases in aptitude scores; however, one can argue that the high number of hours the average child dedicates to television is not being given over to hobbies, socializing, or reading. The diversion of time from reading is critical. In a complex technilogical society, reading becomes more rather than less important.

Further research describes television's ability to disseminate information. As a transmitter of "facts", television news is inherently inefficient, compared to print. A transcript of a typical 22 minute, bits-and-pieces evening news program equals in wordage about two columns of the New York Times. Yet 75 percent of Americans report that they get "most" of their news from television (The Wilson Quarterly/Winter 1981). The three major network news shows in 1979-80 together averaged an audience of 30 million every night. The audiences are disproportionately old (41 percent are 55 years of age or older) and female (45 percent of news viewers are adult

women). Children aged 2 to 11 are far more likely to watch the evening news than are teenagers. More than half of all U.S. households did not watch these shows even once a month (The Wilson Quarterly). Considering that TV is the principal medium for much of society's knowledge of current events, certainly this lends credibility to the notion that society is even less well informed than was true only a generation ago.

DOCTORAL TRAINING FOR ADULT EDUCATORS

Adult and continuing educators are, more and more, graduates of doctoral programs at major public and private institutions. In projecting the future impact of this relatively recent development, it may be useful to examine the theory and research base of adult education and select characteristics of those persons who hold doctorate degrees in the field.

Adult education emerged as a recognized field of study in the years from 1915 to 1965. Much of John Dewey's writing had meaning for the education of adults, and, in the middle 1920's, his Columbia colleague, Edward L. Thorndike, produced a pioneer book on adult learning (Harrington, 1977). In the following decade the Carnegie Corporation grants under the support of Frederick Keppel, produced much of the early literature on adult education. Adult

education emerged as a field of graduate study in 1935 when the Teacher's College of Columbia University began offering advance degrees in the field (Knowles, 1962). By 1962, Cyril Houle (1964) reported that fifteen universities in the United States had active programs leading to master's and doctor's degrees in adult education.

In a study of the doctorate in adult education from 1935 to 1965, Houle and Buskey (1966) found that thirty universities were awarding the doctorate in education. Griffith and Cloutier (1970) found that the credential conferred on those who complete preparation programs for adult education varies widely. Even more confusing is the extreme variety of names used to designate the programs in which the credentials are awarded; i.e., adult education, adult religious education, community education, extension administration, etc.

Griffith and Cloutier not only documented the diversity, but also commented on its cost:

> A part of the price which must be paid for the privilege of remaining somewhat amorphous is the limitation of public acknowledgement of the existence of a discrete profession of adult education.

Despite the lack of uniformity in the names used to identify

the area of study, a steady flow of individuals have pursued doctoral training since 1935 (Griffith, 1980). Griffith (1980) reported that through calendar year 1977, 2,038 individuals have earned what they, and the institutions at which they earned their terminal degrees, believed were doctorates in adult education. At least 150 individuals are emerging with "earned doctorates" each year. Despite the absence of a clear "titled identity" as a field of study, there are other characteristic distinctions that make adult education somewhat different from other traditional subject areas in academia. Houle (1976) argues the field of adult education does not have a solid foundation of scholarship; Harrington (1977) suggests it's weak in theory.

The literature supports both of these contentions. In 1960, Burton W. Kreitlow drew up a list of what he felt were needed studies in the adult learning. Kreitlow identified the areas in a most pressing need for research as follows:

1. The adult as a learner.
2. The adults' response to sociocultural phenomena.
3. The adult educational enterprise including purposes and goals.
4. Understanding of adult education.

5. The educational process.

6. The educational program.

7. Administration of programs.

8. Counseling adults.

9. Preparation of adult educators.

10. The evaluation of programs.

Fifteen years later he had to report that none of these topics had been investigated, questioning whether adult education was a "rigorous research field" (Harrington). Long and Agyekum (1974) reported that Adult Education, the research quarterly, had published very few articles based on doctoral dissertations in the field. This characteristic differs from the more traditional academic areas in which dissertations yield a rich scholarly return (Harrington).

Kreitlow, in reporting on Research in Adult Education, questions whether it is realistic to build a coordinated and comprehensive body of research in a field that is so diverse. Kreitlow argues we may have to borrow from other fields:

> Is it possible that the diversity of the field of adult education is such that research must always be borrowed from another field, or at least have the bulk of it come from other disciplines? This may be true until such time as there is more clarity as to what adult education

> actually is . . . . What this final consenus may be is only conjecture at this point. Is adult education founded in the disciplines of social science with an interpretation of their implications for adult education? Is it a concentration of research by adult educators with but small concern for research in related fields? Is it based in the fields of sociology, psychology, communication, and political science with selective but critical descriptive, analytical, and experimental research in the "adult classroom"? Whatever it might be, within a reasonably short time research must be developed to gain the knowledge needed to improve adult education and adult learning (Axford, 1969).

Houle (1970) projects a sence of optimism about the field stating:

> Slowly, however too slowly, the leaders of the field of adult education are abandoning their reliance on intuition and imitation and are acquiring a body of tested knowledge on which it is possible to build expertise in attacking illiteracy, disease, intolerance, narrowness of viewpoint, incompeter e and other handicaps man encounters as he tries to build a new world.

Clearly, the problems associated with developing a tested "body of knowledge" can be traced to the diversity, confused identity and lack of a real definition for adult education. The actual employment of those persons who receive doctorates also points to the lack of development. Houle and Busky (1966) conducted a survey to determine what kind of work was being done by those persons who receive doctorates in adult education. An overwhelming majority of respondents, 64.2 percent, were engaged in administration as their primary function. Conversely, 12.8 percent of the respondents reported the teaching of adult education as a field of study as their primary function. These data strongly suggest that the majority of those possessing doctorates in adult education are not primarily involved in teaching and scholarly research directly related to the field. Harrington (1977) reports that most of the doctoral candidates to date have been practitioners rather than scholars, men and women with few research interests. This accounts for the relative weakness of their scholarly publication record. Houle and Buskey (1966) noted that 59.9 percent of those persons with doctorates in adult education who responded to a survey said they were not members of the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., which purports to be the umbrella organization for all who think of themselves primarily as adult educators. This suggests that 40 percent

of those who possess a doctorate in adult education are not sufficiently committed to the adult education profession to join the single national organization. This characteristic is significant in that the national organizations in many disciplines, through organizational journals and conferences, provide a forum for presentations of papers and publication of research.

Griffith (1980) describes the organizational fragmentation of adult educators as follows:

> All too often those in positions of administrative leadership in institutions providing adult programs identify more with their employing institution than they do with adult education as a field. Consequently, their primary national organization is organized on the basis of the institutions involved (for instance, the National University Extension Association, American Library Association, American Society of Training Directors, Correctional Education Association) rather than on the basis of the common functions such adult educators perform. Similarly, individuals whose responsibility lies in providing instruction for adult learners appear to place this primary associational loyalty with organizations restricted to serving a particular clientele or dealing with specific

content (such as the American Home Economics Association, American Medical Association, American Nurses' Association, American Vocational Association, Music Educators' National Conference, National Conference on Social Welfare, National Recreation Association). Still other adult educators group together on the basis of the medium they employ (for example, the Joint Council on Educational Television, National Association of Educational Broadcasters, National Home Study Council).

The fragmentation of adult educators on a national basis can be useful in terms of professionals with varied "common purposes" gathering together to share ideas and research for the benefit of all. However, this same fragmentation makes sharing research and applying those findings to the existing body of knowledge a complex task.

PROJECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF ADULT EDUCATION

Throughout this paper, the thesis has been that history, when examined in light of contemporary developments can identify forces at work in the world whose impact on our destiny is neither wholly arbitrary nor wholly unpredictable. This section of the paper will present my predictions of the future of adult and

continuing education in view of changing demographics, accumulating evidence that our society is less literate and well informed and the fact that more adult educators are graduates of doctoral programs in adult education.

IMPLICATIONS OF SELECT DEMOGRAPHICS FOR THE FUTURE

In an analysis of the 1969, 1972 and 1975 adult participation studies, Edward Cohen-Rosenthal found that college-educated adults constituted only 25 percent of the population but more than 50 percent of the adult learners in 1975. Cross (1979) summarized the relationship of adult characteristics to adult learning as revealed in more than 30 major studies conducted in the past five years. Her analysis reveals that the best single correlate of learning among all adults is educational attainment, the most powerful predictor of participation is age. Cross (1980) argues that those persons in the age ranges 25 to 45 have largely concentrated on occupational and professional training for career advancement. This historical trend combined with increases in career transitions and the projection that the majority population will be comprised of persons aged 30 to 44 by the year 2,000 clearly suggests that demand for occupational and career training will be substantial

in the future (Cross, 1981; Bowen, 1982).

Secondly, given educational attainment as the primary predictor of adult participation, we can clearly foresee enrollment increases in the future. Over the years the educational attainment of the population has risen rapidly. Between 1940 and 1979, the percentage of the population 25 years and older who have attended college has increased from 10.1 percent in 1940 to 31.1 percent in 1979 (Bowen, 1982). Both the Carnegie Commission (1982), and Bowen, controlling for a wide variety of variables, project this historical trend to continue in the future. The increased numbers of educated adults should, as history has shown, increase demand for adult education.

Thirdly, in today's rapidly changing society, people in transition regarding their jobs, increasing employment opportunities for women and other minorities, and rapidly changing technology indicate that strict adherence to the linear life plan is unreasonable. Hesburgh and others (1973) argue that life-long learning is not only desirable but essential:

> When knowledge was more stable than knowledge and wisdom was cumulative, there was some reason for highly structured, pre-established curricula for the education of the youth. But now, much of the knowledge and

professional training of a graduate is obsolete fifteen years after graduation unless that education is continually updated through purposeful learning.

The most prominent alternative to the linear life plan is the "cyclic life plan" (Best and Stern, 1976). Its basic premise is to redistribute work, education and leisure across the life span. Descriptions of the cyclic life plan usually include a distribution of education and leisure inserted into the working years and portions of work time extended into early and late years. In Europe, the periods of education that are inserted into the work years are referred to as recurrent education (Cross, 1981).

A variation of the recurrent education theme does seem to be taking place in the United States without the benefit of any particular plan. More and more young people are willing to "stop out"; that is, to take a break between high school and college (Cross, 1971). In 1973, 62 percent of the college freshmen entered college immediately following high school graduation; by 1976, the figure was down to 55 percent, with 22 percent waiting one to three years before entering and 19 percent waiting five years or more (Cross, 1981).

The increased adoption of the cyclic life plan, continued transitions related to employment, new technology and the

necessary adoption of the life-long learning principle will mean increased demands for continuing education in the future.

The final projection for the future based on select demographic patterns relates to changes in student composition enrolled in traditional academia. Most colleges that have traditionally relied on the 18 to 24 year-old group for enrollments will have a difficult time surviving. The Carnegie Commission (1981) provides the following analysis of the impact demographic depressions of traditional students will have on higher education:

> Recent developments and the changes we project for the remainder of the century will give us a dramatically different composition of the national student body than we have had traditionally. In 1960 it was composed predominantly of young majority males attending full-time. By 2000, there will be more women than men, as many people over 21 as 21 and under, nearly as man part-time as full-time attendees, and one-quarter of all students in the classroom of 2000 would not have been there if the composition of 1960 had been continued. This is a fundamental, almost radical change in higher education. We expect that students will be more nearly the center of attention on

> campus during the next 20 years than in the past 10. They will be recruited more actively, admitted more readily, retained more assiduously, counselled more attentively, graded more considerately, financed more adequately, taught more conscientiously, placed in jobs more insistently, and the curriculum will be more tailored to tastes.

How the Carnegie Council predictions will affect particular institutions is extremely difficult to predict. However, demographic projections clearly indicate that the future of many institutions of higher education will depend to a great extent on how they respond to the needs and concerns of the non-traditional student. The Carnegie Commission (1981) suggests enrollment projections for institutions of higher education by the year 2000 could vary anywhere from an increase of 40 percent to a decrease of 50 percent. In suggesting a course of action for the future, the Commission states:

> We advocate a course of action based on long run confidence in the future of higher education, moderated by short term concerns; a course of adherence to continuing basic purposes while adjusting flexibly to temporary changes in circumstances. It is not a time

for panic or euphoria.

Stern (1980) suggests that competition for the adult will become intense. Stern (1980) asserts there is a brisk, if not fierce, competition for the continuing education dollar. Stern further states:

> Competition will result in the survival of the fittest--probably not the academic fittest, but those with the most managerial, promotional and political acumen.

Several benefits will be realized by those institutions or organizations who are successful in the next 20 years. Public schools and community colleges in the past have not only increased enrollments through continuing education, but also have increased the number of direct supporters of their institutions.

Throughout the history of adult education we've noted its strengths as flexibility and the ability to adapt to changing societal needs. It now seems ironic that someone would suggest that traditional academia adopt the successful ingredients of adult education practice in an effort to attract and retain adult students.

IMPLICATIONS RELATING TO SOCIETY BEING LESS LITERATE, LESS INFORMED

The trends of rising educational levels and new technology suggest a need for a new set of assumptions about education. Historically, life was more stable than it is now and wisdom was cumulative; there was some reason for highly structured, pre-established curricula for the education of youth. Now, however, the world is changing faster than the generations, and individuals must live and adjust to several different worlds during their lifetimes. Because of the rapid changes, Toffler (1970) contends that "most people are grotesquely unprepared to cope" with the pace of change and "mass disorientation" in the society may be the result.

Certainly "distortion" is already the case for many Americans who rely strictly on periodic "flashes" of news events for their sense of what is occurring in the world. One could ponder the thought of how many persons concerned with our fledging economy have heard the words "supply side economics" but have no understanding of what it means. The implications of rapid social and technological change and the knowledge explosion are many and varied. Knowles (1962) contends our new world will require a new purpose for education: the development of the capacity in each individual to learn, to change, to create a new culture throughout the span of his life. Michael (1968) projects that many skilled workers of tomorrow's world will live lives subject to disruption from

cybernation, the application of computers to automation. With cybernation, whole blocks of activity become unnecessary and new ones arise. The development will have a significant impact on professional education programs as we presently know them.

Michael (1968) projects that in the future many occupationally skilled adults and most students preparing for skill-based occupations will have to change their perception of the relationship between work and study. Instead of accumulating a repertoire of skills in school sufficient for a lifetime career, the future student will have to learn and the future teaching process will have to inculcate the expectation that work and education will be a circular arrangement. The customary middle-class expectation of a one-way continuity from school to occupation or career will no longer be realistic.

In the future, the purpose of education will shift from focusing primarily on the transmission of soon-to-be-outdated knowledge to the development of the person's capacity to learn. This educational change will change the role of the teacher from the "one who transmits knowledge" to "one who primarily helps students to inquire" (Knowles).

Toffler, in The Third Wave (1980), projects the future of education:

> Over the long pull, however, we can expect education to change. More learning will occur outside rather than inside the classroom. Despite the pressure from unions, the years of compulsory schooling will grow shorter, not longer. Instead of rigid age segregation, young and old will mingle. Education will become more interspread and interwoven with work, and more spread out over a lifetime.

The recent advances of computer technology mean that it will play a significant role in the future. The implications for adult education include providing computer literacy training and designing non-traditional educational programs for the expanding home computer market which reached 300,000 homes in 1980 (Toffler). Telephone linkages currently available allow home computer operators instant access to major wire services for news, brokerage firms for stock information, and other forms of continuous news and sports information.

Continued expansion of the cable television network will provide yet another opportunity for continuing educators--an opportunity to service the increasing number of "do-it-yourselfers." Recent trends indicate that our society is more and more becoming consumer conscious. High interest rates and high costs of skilled

labor, are driving more Americans to adult education courses to learn basic trades, i.e., basic carpentry, plumbing, electricity and auto repair. Although "how to do it books" have been on the market for years, many people prefer the "demonstration model." Some people may even be willing to sacrifice an hour of "Dallas" or "Flamingo Road" for a basic course in Deck Building 101. Many lumber and hardware outlets have already begun offering such adult education opportunities because potential customers are badly needed due to the recession in the housing industry. Certainly, expanded use of home computers as "news sources", cable television as information sources and other well conceived continuing education programs will alter the current public's practice of "entertainment consumption" to "information consumption."

IMPLICATIONS OF DOCTORAL TRAINING

There are several trends in our society that will impact at least the research aspect of adult education. At the university level, intense interest in recruitment, retention and needs of adult learners will arise primarily because of demographic changes that will make adult students the majority population on college campuses. Much of the new research conducted will be pursued on an interdisciplinary basis to insure that all academic disciplines are represented,

thus allowing for a fair impartial perspective. This fair impartial perspective will be especially important for traditional disciplines who will desperately need this enrollment and retention information as their survival will depend on it. Further, as these academic units begin accepting the cyclic life plan and the life-long learning philosophy, a whole new set of academic certificate completion programs will be offered, i.e., certificate of computer application to public administration, technological nursing, advanced gerontology, etc. The development of the certificate sequence should lead to intensified research in the areas of program planning and evaluation as institutions of higher education will be forced into the competitive open market for the higher education dollar. In general, the research on adult education will not only satisfy Kreitlow's recommendations but go far beyond.

The increased recognition of adult and continuing education will bring a new sense of status to it as an academic discipline. Further, this new interest will result in renaming the field consistent with the new view of education. Those students who receive doctorates in the year 2000 will receive them in Continuing Education with a specialty area designated. Faculties in the continuing education department will also be closely tied to the

"clearing house for continuing educators." This in-house network will provide a computer information service to the thousands of continuing educators in the field who request program models, curricula, and methods information on the courses they teach. Enrollments in the department will expand with applications from trainers in business, industry, and Ph.D.'s from struggling disciplines who are looking for employment in a growing area.

The federal government will also begin heavily supporting research in adult education as changing technology demands retraining of military and other support personnel. This development will increase employment opportunities for doctoral prepared adult educators in government and continue the trend of graduates being employed in primarily administrative rather than teaching and research positions.

The diversification of employment among those receiving doctorates will continue the past practice of organizational fragmentation among adult educators.

Clearly, the future of adult educators appears promising; however, some cautions should be considered. Firstly, doctoral trained personnel cannot replace the thousands of persons currently teaching in adult education programs. Their diversified academic and professional backgrounds have allowed adult education to be flexible

and imaginative in responding to a variety of educational needs.

Secondly, I would suspect that to some curriculum specialists, the expanded adult education market will result in the development of lock-step undergraduate, graduate and terminal degree programs. The next logical step would be to require that all adult educators possess a specific credential authorizing them to practice adult education. Over time, these possible developments would place adult educators in the same employment situation as many primary and secondary schoolteachers. It would seem to me that a better path for higher education to take would be the expansion of the cooperative extension model, expanding the services far beyond agriculture but maintaining the essential characteristics of its successful past.

Absent these potential developments, history, in light of contempory trends, suggests that indeed, adult education will have a glorious future.

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